

Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

I have been lucky enough to have birthed both of my babies at home. I made that choice as I never saw the need for a hospital in what were 2 healthy pregnancies. Pregnancy and birth are not illnesses and I believe that hospitals should be for sick people. My experience was absolutely wonderful. The love and support of my midwife gave me the confidence to do to listen to my body and work with it to birth my babies in surroundings and with people that made me comfortable. The prenatal support, birth support and postnatal support from one person is priceless. The relationship that you develop with your midwife is extremely special as they work with you through this journey. The joy of being able to have my first child, in the comfort of her home and surrounded by people she knows and loves, present at the birth of her sister. It horrifies me to think that homebirth may not be an option for my daughters or anyone. Please don't take this right away from us.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Husson

